

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please **amend claims 1, 4, 8, and 11** as follows:

Sub 10 1. (Currently amended) A method of allocating bandwidth capacity for data frames transmitted over a SONET/SDH ring, comprising the steps of:

subdividing a portion of the data frames comprising a SONET/SDH ring ~~transmission layer~~ into ~~one~~ two or more logical ~~frames~~ channels, each logical ~~frame~~ channel having associated therewith a predetermined bandwidth capacity;

A 10 assigning a protection mechanism to each logical ~~frame~~ channel;
and

monitoring the SONET/SDH ring transmission to determine protection mechanisms associated with each logical ~~frame~~ channel.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the data frames comprise a plurality of STS level one frames.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein the protection mechanism comprises one of a layer 1 SONET protection mechanism and a layer 2 protection mechanism.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3 wherein, if the protection mechanism assigned to a particular logical ~~frame~~ channel is not layer 1, the bandwidth capacity for ~~that~~ the particular

logical ~~ring~~ channel is allocated among three or more nodes comprising the SONET ring.

5. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the layer 1 protection mechanism comprises a bidirectional line switched ring protection mechanism.

6. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the layer 1 protection mechanism comprises a unidirectional path switched ring protection mechanism.

7. (Original) The method of claim 3 wherein the layer 2 protection mechanism comprises at least one of: an Ethernet protection mechanism, an asynchronous transport mode protection mechanism, or a time division multiplexing protection mechanism.

8. (Currently amended) A network node for use in a SONET/SDH ring, comprising:

a first circuit configured to subdivide a portion of data frames comprising a SONET/SDH ~~ring transmission layer~~ into ~~one~~ two or more logical ~~frames~~ channels, each logical ~~frame~~ channel having associated therewith a predetermined bandwidth capacity;

a second circuit configured to assign a protection mechanism corresponding to a SONET/SDH protection level to each logical-~~frame~~ channel; and

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a third circuit operable to monitor the SONET/SDH ~~ring~~
~~transmission~~ layer to determine protection mechanisms associated
with each logical ~~frame~~ channel.

9. (Original) The network node of claim 8 wherein the data
frames comprise a plurality of STS level one frames.

10. (Original) The network node of claim 9 wherein the
protection mechanism comprises one of a layer 1 SONET protection
mechanism and a layer 2 protection mechanism.

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein, if the
protection mechanism assigned to a particular logical ~~frame~~ channel
is not layer 1, the bandwidth capacity for ~~that~~ the particular
logical ~~ring~~ channel is allocated among three or more nodes
comprising the SONET ring.

12. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the layer 1
protection mechanism comprises a bidirectional line switched ring
protection mechanism.

13. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the layer 1
protection mechanism comprises a unidirectional path switched ring
protection mechanism.

14. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein the layer 2 protection mechanism comprises at least one of: an Ethernet protection mechanism, an asynchronous transport mode protection mechanism, or a time division multiplexing protection mechanism.

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15. (Original) The network node of claim 8 wherein the data frames comprise a plurality of VT-1.5 level frames.

16. (New) The network node of claim 2 wherein the data frames comprise a plurality of non-contiguous STS level one frames.

17. (New) The network node of claim 9 wherein the data frames comprise a plurality of non-contiguous STS level one frames.
